

The Snow Witch

by alovinegirl

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Summary: Akira & her friends cast a spell to go back in time... and it worked! Now Akira is stuck in Japan in the 1800's. The only way back is to find the Spell Book, but she is being chased after those who want her power. Her only protection - the Shinsengumi.
Saito/OC

1. Chapter 1: Passing Through Time

Chapter 1: The Passage Through Time

The group of girls giggled as they gathered into the inside of the forbidden forest. The thrill of simply entering made them feel high above the clouds, and what they were about to do next would be even more soâ€¦|witchcraft.

It all began on the way back home from school. They found a book of spells on the floor, almost as if it had waited there especially for them. Now all they could think about was casting a spell to test the validity of the curious book.

A girl with blonde wavy hair flipped through it, and then stopped. "This one!" she exclaimed. "Akira should do this one!"

A girl with long black flowing hair and nervous green eyes stepped forward. "Why me?" she asked.

"Because you have a witch's name, if anyone of us can cast a spell it'll be you," she gave her a cruel smile. Akira had no other choice but to comply with the girl's wishes. After all, the girl knew her secret.

"What's the spell?"

The girl smiled a happy smile, "It's a time travelling spell! Just remember that you are going to Japan in 1853, specifically

Kyoto."

Akira nodded her head, took a deep breath and read the spell from the book.

"Deus de caelis,"

"concede mihi voluntati meae."

"Duc me ad terram ceciderunt fortes,"

"ubi potentia nihil est postero honorare ... "

Streams of light emerged, surrounding Akira, and then she was gone.

"***Japan 1864***"

She ran and ran as fast as she could, but she was no match for them. She didn't even know why she was being chased after. One moment she was in the forest with her friends playing with a book of witchcraft that they found. Now she strange men wearing traditional Japanese attire were after her, in the middle of an alley way.

She hit a dead-end. There was nowhere else to run. The men who were after her were laughing, proud that they had caught her. "It's over now, so why not be a good girl and tell us where he is hiding."

The girl's spearmint green eyes widened, shocked by their words. _What are they talking about? Who is __he__? _She tried to be brave and responded, "I-I don't know what you're talking about." Her voice trembled and her heart beat furiously. She was in no place to reject them, but she honestly did not know anything.

Upset the two men went on, "Stop lying to us! A pathetic little girl like you can be killed at any moment! NOW TELL US WHERE HE IS!"

The girl said nothing. She trembled of fear. The two men were losing their patience with her and pulled out their katana. "Now look girly, we can either do this easy way or the hard way."

The girl froze in her place. _Swords? Why do they have swords? _They terrified. She was in an unknown place, with unknown men who had old weapons. Something told her that the spell worked and that now she was stuck in the place she chosen on a whim. _What was the place and time again? _She didn't remember but her attackers did not take her silence kindly.

"Well then I guess it'll be the hard way!" One of the men lifted the sword up and was about to pierce it through her flesh. She readied herself to either dodge or run when a voice called out from behind the men.

"Now that's hardly fair. How can two rogue samurai kill a poor, defenseless woman?"

Two men with light blue haori were at the entry of the alley. One had cold azure eyes and deep indigo hair, tied in a loose pony tail on the right side of his face. He was silently analyzing the situation. The man who had spoken had brown hair tied behind him with

grass-green eyes, wearing a smirk in his face. It looked like he was having fun.

"Mind your own business!" yelled the second rogue samurai.

"I'm afraid it is our business," said the man with brown hair. "You see we are on patrol and it's the duty of the members of the Shinsengumi to protect the young woman there."

The man with indigo hair told his companion, "Don't kill them, Souji."

Souji laughed maniacally. "You're no fun, Hajime-kun."

The second rogue samurai was the first to swing his sword and the four samurai engaged in a short battle, for the battle was quickly won by the men in blue. The girl simply stood there watching red blood stains splatter onto the men's clothing and her kimono. As Souji and Hajime finished, they directed their attention to the girl. Souji grinned and looked at the girl. "I guess you're not afraid of a little blood are you."

The girl stared at them wide-eyed, but then turned her gaze. She did not want her eyes to show the men that she was lost in fear. You're wrong, were the first words she thought to say, but the words the stayed in her throat, instead the girl shook her head.

"Why were these men after you?" Hajime asked the girl in a firm voice, as if announcing to her that lying was futile.

She shook her head again. She didn't know.

Souji laughed and continued, "Don't give us that. We have been spying on these guys for a while now. They don't attack people randomly."

"I â€" I don't know," she managed to whisper. They didn't buy it. In their eyes, the girl was far more suspicious than the rogue samurai. Neither of these two men would risk their life to capture her unless they had a good reason.

Hajime swiftly moved his sword to her throat and spoke, "I suggest you tell us unless you wish for it to be forced out of you."

The girl gazed to the sword. The smell of blood and iron was overwhelming. Her vision began to blur. Her limbs became heavy, her breathing slowed. Tears flowed from her cheeks.

"I don't know," she whispered again, "one moment I was just walking, and the next I was being chased after. I don't even know who he is."

"Who is he?"

"Gladium dominis nivis et cerasa," she unconsciously replied.

She collapsed of both fear and exhaustion not realized that she had just given Souji and Hajime the answer they were looking for. Unfortunately for the men, the answer only created more questions as they did not understand the language she had spoken in. They figured

it she was just trying to give them a hard time.

Souji sighed in frustration. "That wasn't a real answer. Well, I guess we have to take her to headquarters to question her even further"

Hajime walked over to the girl's body as Souji spoke. As he cradled her into his arms, noticing the girl was pale. Her black hair was burnt and there were traces of bruises on her arms. Whoever she was, she knew something that their enemies wanted to know. And knowing what their enemies wanted, was something they needed.

_End Chapter 1__ *****_

****Author's Notes:****

****So this completes the first chapter of my first fanfiction ever. Yay! I know everything is unclear now but I promise I'll make it better as the story goes on. And for the spells she says in the chapters they're in latin(cuz it sounds cool). Please review my story and tell me your honest opinion on it. I am a very critical person and so I take criticism in open arms to improve my writing.****

****P.S. Here are the translations of the spell and the answer she gave to Saito Hajime, and Okita Souji.****

****Magic Spell - "God of Heaven, grant me my wish. Lead me to the land of the mighty fallen, where power is nothing next to honor ...

****"Who is ****_he_****?" -" The Sword of the Lord of snow and cherries"*****

2. Chapter 2: The Girl Who Lost Her Way

Chapter 2: The Girl who Lost Her Way

Her green eyes flew open. _Where am I?! What am I doing here?!_ She felt something tight on her wrists, as she tugged, it went through her flesh. The same sensation was on her ankles. There was a sour ball inside her mouth that tasted like lemon; over her mouth was a white piece cloth.

She squirmed trying to escape. _Where am I?! I want to go home!_ All you can hear of the poor girl's screams were small muffled sounds, hardly audible. She twisted to the left, and then saw a blank wall. It seemed like an empty doll house and Akira would have been mused by it if she were not tied up.

She turned to the right, her long black hair falling into her face. The man who was called Hajime entered the room, with a tray of food. Food she was not interested in. She was frightened and wanted to leave as soon as possible. She didn't stop struggling. She wanted to run.

"I will untie you. If you run, I will kill you." Hajime said the words rather coldly. He was disgusted to see the pathetic girl struggle for her life as if she were an animal. The girl trembled slightly as she nodded her head.

He moved over to untie her and removed the cloth and ball from her mouth. His hands were strong but gentle almost. Then it hit her, the girl felt a sharp pain in her chest as she realized she was no longer in her place or time. She needed the book to return but she lost it when she was running away.

When he finished untying her, he was surprised that the girl didn't struggle, but was still frightened enough to cry in his presence. She was wailing like a child who had lost her mother. Something told him that perhaps the girl simply was in the wrong place at the wrong time. It pained him to hear her cries, but he didn't dare show it on his face. He patiently waited until she stopped.

He clenched his hands to avoid reaching over and comforting her. It was true that he didn't care much about woman, but they still shouldn't enter the world that belongs to a warrior. A woman should not be forced into a situation such as this, but there was no other choice. She had information, and they were going to get it out of her. Hiccups still escaped the poor girl's lips. He nearly lost to himself and moved his hand to remove the girl's tears from her face, when the girl wiped them on her own. He retracted his hand, frustrated at himself.

He looked at her in the eyes. "Eat," he commanded the girl. She obeyed.

She looked at the tray of food her had brought her. A bowl of rice sat on the center, fish was on the lower left, and there was a small cup of tea on the upper left. She took the chopsticks carefully, trying to remember how they were used. She held them incorrectly. The young man just assumed her emotions were still unsettled.

It wasn't until after her first few bites that she realized she was hungry. She quickly ate everything on the tray, even the fish which she dislikes. She glanced over at the man who brought her food. She held her breath as she noticed there was no emotion in the man's face.

Hajime noticed the girl stopped eating and was staring at him. "Are you finished?" he asked her.

The girl shook her head but kept her gaze on his face. He felt uncomfortable. No one had so openly stared at him without so much as flinching. The girl's mint green eyes stayed showing fear and confusion as they kept searching his.

He maintained eye contact and began glaring at the girl, hoping she would quickly look away. Her expression saddened and then slowly returned to her food, disappointed in something.

They were empty, she thought. It was the first time she had saw someone with such cruel empty eyes. I wonder what he's missing. She knew the man was strong, his sword and hands were proof of that. His beauty was like a painting; only to be admired from afar. His voice beckoned any person to come near just to hear him speak. She also knew he, at the very least, had one other companion. So what is he missing? She decided to ponder the question later.

"May I know who you are and where I am?" It took all of Akira's

bravery to make the words leave her mouth. Even as she spoke, her voice was a little louder than a whisper.

Hajime stared down at the girl and she had wished she hadn't said anything. "I will tell you, when you tell me who you are and why those men were after you."

I made him mad. She lowered her head and her voice stayed just as low. "You would not believe me if I told you."

The man kept his gaze on the girl. She knew then that he did not care whether it is believable or not. He just wanted her to speak, now.

"My name is Kotetsu Akira and I-I fell from the sky. The men, they saw me. They said I must be related to somebody and I probably knew where he was, but I didn't know who they were talking about." Akira kept her voice low as she could hardly believe her own words. She glanced at the man's eyes again.

He was upset. Her statement was ridiculous; how is it possible for a person to fall from the sky? But, as her eyes met his, he knew she was serious. Her eyes were serious. She was not lying to him.

He sighed. "My name is Saitou Hajime. You are in the Shinsengumi headquarters. Unfortunately, your reason will have to be judged by the vice-commander."

Akira's eyes saddened even further. She might not even be able to live, much less go back home. That's all she wanted, to go home.

Saitou studied the girl's eyes. She knew what he meant and she was not willing to defy it. He was impressed at her resolve but, to an extent he was a little upset that she was not willing to put the effort to live.

He tied her hands together, leaving them a bit loose for her comfort. Akira took in everything that was going on. His face, his touch, his smell, she wanted to take in everything before her death. "You smell nice," she said unconsciously, blushing and then turning away as she realized what she said.

"Thank you," he said dispassionately. He grabbed the rope and opened the door into the hall.

The girl didn't want to leave with any regret from this world. If she was going to go she was going to let it all out. As Saitou turned his back she whispered, "and you're very pretty." The girl did not think he heard the last part she said as he did not comment on it, either way she said it and so she was content.

Saitou has been complimented by women before, but not in this manner. She was assuming she will probably die and so was saying her last words. It was obvious she was not born of a warrior family, so it made him wonder what kind of life she lived to be calm about her own death, and even allow herself to let go of any regrets she had. She was an interesting girl. It would be a pity if she really was put to death.

****Author's Notes:****

****Wow second chapter already! I am pretty much running on adrenaline right now so I apologize in advanced for how vague the story might be, but I felt a string of inspiratio and I wasn't going to let go. I am pretty sure the other writers know what I'm talking about. Once it's gone, it's gone...So please review! I like knowing what people are thinking. ****

3. Chapter 3: Forgiving the Sinner

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Saitou entered the room with the girl in question behind him.

"Sit," Saitou told her and she did so. She disliked being ordered like a dog, but obedience was a wise choice in this case. Everyone in the room introduced themselves. The red-head is Harada. The small boy is Heisuke. The muscular man with short hair is Shinpachi. The man with glasses is Sannan. The who was with Saitou during the operation is Okita. The man with long black hair in a ponytail is the vice-commander Hijikata. She already knew Saitou. Their commander was currently absent, so Hijikata was to give the verdict.

"So what's the report?" Hijikata kept it on a business like tone.

Saitou quickly explained to him what Akira told him early in the room. A look of frustration spread across the room. No one was fond of the explanation given, they were more confused as to why someone would chose to say that of all things.

"I guess you won't be surprised if I said I don't believe it," Hijikata said as he turned to face Akira.

"I'm not. I can hardly believe it myself," a short pause, "it was only supposed to be a game," she murmured the last part. All she was doing was fooling around with her friends with a book they found. She didn't want to believe this was real, she really didn't. It wasn't until Okita pointed out her phrase that she regretted saying it.

"What was 'supposed to be a game' Kotetsu-chan?" Souji grinned; happy he had caught the girl.

All of the men's eyes were focused on her, they too wanted an answer.

"It involves more ridiculous things. Are you sure you want to hear it?" she held the vain hope that they would refuse and tell her no.

"Of course," said Hijikata.

Akira sighed. I should have known. She went on to explain that she wasn't from this era, but from the future and she wasn't even from this country. She knew Japanese because her father, who was of Japanese descent, had insisted she learn it. She was from the country side of a small European country. She told them she found a book and

her friends pushed her to read one of the texts, making up a scenario they thought was going to be fun. When she read it, she fell from the sky to the ground here at this time and this era.

Okita couldn't contain his laughter. It was very amusing to him. The other members either looked angry, or confused. They didn't know what to make of it.

"So you're telling us to believe all of that, that's quite brave of you." Harada looked at her with scornful eyes. To him it was obvious she was lying. Heisuke and Shimpachi shared the same scornful looks.

"What happened to the book?" asked Hijikata, "You said it came with you, yes."

Akira couldn't hold back the tears that formed in her eyes. Crying was expected at interrogations, so they waited until she finished. Between sobs and hiccups she managed to say, "I-I lost it. My only way back home, the only way, was lost."

"Why did you let go of something as important as that?" Heisuke's voice was cruel, disapproving. He was right though. Why did she let go?

The girl stopped sobbing, but the tears still ran down her face. She wanted them to stop; she wanted to wake up from this horrible dream. Neither of those would actually happen. "Will you kill me?" she asked. She kept her voice low but steady, almost afraid to hear the answer.

Hijikata furrowed his brows, thinking intensively. "We should, but we won't."

The girl's eyes widened in shock, as did everyone else's. She froze in place, now she didn't believe the words he had spoken. Shimpachi asked Hijikata, "Are you sure? You mean you actually believe her?!"

"How much of it is true, I don't know. I do believe she has nothing to do with this case, otherwise she would have said so earlier."

"But she does know something," Okita added fuel to the flame. Everyone turned their heads toward his direction. "What? You don't remember?" His question obviously directed at Akira.

She slowly shook her head. No, she did not, but she hoped it wasn't anything too troublesome.

"Gu-ra-di-o to-mi-ni-su ni-hi-su e-to se-ra-sa," Saitou cooperated.

"I'm sorry," she said, "I can probably guess that it's Latin even so, I can only make out a few words."

"Then make the out," commanded Harada.

"To-mi-ni-su is probably _dominus_ and se-ra-sa _cerasa._ E-to is most likely _et_, but I can't make out the other two words."

"That's great and all, but we want to know what it means," Shinpachi told her impatiently.

"It's not fully translated so it wouldn't make sense. Right now it's gu-ra-di-o the Lord ni-hi-su and cherries."

"That's not very helpful," Okita gave her a sheepish grin, feeling slightly guilty for putting her on the spot.

"No it's not," she agreed, "but over time I may be able to make out the words." She let out last few hopeful words slip out of her mouth, expecting that their verdict wouldn't change.

Hijikata agreed and even allowed her to stay. She put her under Saitou's charge as he was the only one who remembered the strange words she spoke. He also warned her never to go out alone, as their enemies will still come after her. Akira nodded and as Saitou was taking her to a room closer to his, she couldn't help but smile.

"We can kill you at any moment if we see fit," Saitou reminded her coldly, but the girl kept smiling. Happy she was now free of persecution for now.

4. Chapter 4: Playing Dress Up

Chapter 4: Playing Dress Up

It's been hours and I still can't it put on. _Why didn't they make this a little simpler?_ Akira looked down at her kimono. She may have never seen one before in her era but she saw plenty of women as she was running away in this one. She knows, for a fact, that kimonos didn't look like hers. Her kimono's sleeves ended on her elbows, the rest dangling awkwardly. Her neck line was down to the bottom of her breast looking like a huge shirt, the bottom of the kimono was crooked and longer than her body, and there were still two other sash looking things she didn't put on yet. She didn't even know where they went! _At least I got the under garment and the socks right, _she comforted herself.

At that moment, she wished she had learned more about her father's culture. She had already put her bed away and tied up her hair in hasty bun, her soft curls falling down the loose areas. She wished she was back home. She wanted to be in jeans and a t-shirt, and have a hair straightener to keep her hair in place. She didn't want to have to worry about being killed or an angry samurai captain. _Saitou is probably going to be really mad._

The young man told her to come to his office early in the morning before he went off to patrol. She imagined that he already left to patrol, and was upset because she didn't show up. She truly didn't know much about Saitou, other than that he was a very serious person dedicated to his job; so it was easy to imagine he would come to lecture her later. She sat down on the floor, giving up. _Maybe I should get to the translation. What were the words again gu-ra-di-oâ€|?_

Deep in thought, she didn't hear the door open behind her.

"It's quite brave of you to disobey orders," said a cold voice.

Akira quickly turned her head to see behind her. The young samurai in question watched her with an extra cruelty in his eyes. She quickly turned away upon seeing his eyes. Fear consumed her. She searched for her words, but when she found them, they all stayed in her throat. The menacing man's eyes were piercing her from behind.

"I couldn't put on my kimono," her voice was a soft whisper, barely managing to make the words leave her lips. Her shoulders began to tremble, waiting for the man's judgment.

He examined her shaking body. _She's frightened._ That's to be expected. Her kimono was indeed put on incorrectly. She looked like a child trying to dress herself to show off to her parents. Except her parents weren't here and he found it less than amusing that the woman claimed she couldn't put it on.

"If that's the case how did you manage to dress yourself before?" His voice was more chilling than before. Even he knew that. He waited for the girl to apologize and get dressed on her own after she recognized her own child-like behavior. She turned to him again. Her eyes showed the same hint of sadness they did yesterday. Saitou got lost in her eyes; they were magnificent. Magnificent in the sense of acceptance. She did not defy his logic, nor did she apologize for her own behavior. She simply accepted the way things were.

She let her gaze drop and her voice echoed softly, "this world gave me this kimono. To be honest I have never seen a kimono before I even came here."

"You still insist on that?" Saitou was beginning to question her sanity. She was not lying, but perhaps she lived in the lie, therefore she thought the lie to be true, and that is why she showed sincerity in her eyes.

With all the bravery she could build, she returned her gaze to his eyes. They were cold and scary, but Saitou never questioned her when she looked into them. In fact, he seemed to accept her explanations the more she looked.

Again Saitou saw that her eyes weren't lying. He asked her to stand, so she did. She walked to his direction and stood in front of him. He examined the way she put on her kimono again. _She really is a child_, yet he was slightly disappointed to find that her undergarment was put on correctly. He blew the thought away. _I am a man after all._

His hands untied the first sash, keeping it technical. It was a little more difficult to hide his amusement on how she put on her sleeves. Even a child could put on their sleeves right. He guided each of her arms out of the sleeves; the kimono falling behind her. He went behind her and picked up the kimono.

"Spread your arms," he commanded, and she spread her arms.

He put slid the sleeves on each of her arms. She was about to commit the same mistake she did before until Saitou stopped her. "You don't put your arm in the first hole of the kimono," his deep velvet voice

whispered into her ear. The girl removed her arm from there and slid it until the end of the sleeve thinking how curious it was that he was helping her get dressed.

He then turned her so would be facing him again. Her thoughts began to wonder again why he was helping her. She did not ask for the help, she was merely stating what she could not do.

He slid hands on her thin waist and pulled the sides of each kimono towards him, making sure the edges matched. He then swiftly placed the right side of the kimono on waist, and slid the left side up her abdomen on her left waist. "Hold it." She held the fold. It was so graceful; she didn't notice the once long kimono was now a bit below her ankles.

He grabbed the first sash. His body was close to hers as he tightly wrapped the first sash around her body twice. He could smell the sweet aroma of her body and feel his hands slide along the outline of her waist. He tied the sash tightly and tucked the loose ends on the inside of the sash.

Next he arranged the loose top part of the kimono. He entered his hands on the side holes of the kimono using his hands to smooth out the front and back. When arranging her back, he could not help as to put her in his embrace as he did. Akira blushed lightly. She had never been held by a man before. His arms were strong and firm. _And rigid. _She noticed that Saitou was tense, most likely uncomfortable he was dressing a woman.

"What's wrong?" she asked hoping he wouldn't answer.

Saitou immediately avoided her eyes when she looked up at him. "Lift your arms again," he told her ignoring her question.

She raised her arms more hesitantly this time. He assumed she felt the tension in his body, as he was doing what he had never done before - dressing a woman. He had undressed several, but not dressed them.

Saitou placed the sash on her upper back. He kept it there for a moment, closed his eyes, and when he opened them again he began to wrap the sash right below her breasts. Akira's eyes widened as she realized Saitou's uneasiness. Her cheeks turned a pink color as he finished right on the center. He tied the sash and again hid the left over cloth under the sash.

He continued to smooth out the back and the sides of the kimono. As his hands were correcting the sides, his hand accidentally touched her breast. He turned a light pink color while she turned crimson. "I apologize" he said.

He quickly put on her obi, the last decoration of the kimono, avoiding as much physical contact as possible. The tension in the air was heavy. She thanked Saitou shyly. He brushed it off, "don't let it happen again."

She nodded her head, relaxing now that he returned to the part of himself that she knew.

They went into his office, ready to discuss the rules and

expectations the Shinsengumi had for her during her stay.

****Author's Note:****

****I apologize for the last chapter if it seemed kinda crappy. I was half asleep when I wrote it and before I knew I had posted it. Lesson learned - don't touch laptop when I wake up from naps XD. Anyways, I worked really hard on the first half of the chapter, and the second part...well I got too technical and I felt like I lost my inspiration. It's still kind of slow right now But I promise to pick up the chapters. Please review, I love critics :D****

5. Chapter 5: Burn the Witch

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_ "The man I loved is dead." _

_ "How did he die?" _

_ "He left me for another woman and so, I killed him." _

_ "Why did you kill him?" _

_ "To complete the curse." _

_ "What curse?" _

_ "The curse of the snow woman." _

_ "Why did she curse you?" _

_ "Her lover left her for me." _

_ "Was he the same man who left you?" _

_ "Yes." _

_ "What did the snow woman say?" _

_ "That my lover will leave me and I will kill him." _

_ "What happens when you kill him?" _

_ "My heart will become like hers." _

_ "What is her heart like?" _

_ "An innocent heart filled with sadness." _

_ "Why did you complete the curse?" _

_ "I share her pain, but not her innocence." _

_ "What do you mean by 'not her innocence'?" _

_ "When he left her, she cried of sadness because she knew he chose another. When he left me, I cried of joy because I knew I was going to kill him." _

A few months into living with the Shinsengumi, they were beginning to trust her little by little. It all started when Saitou gave her a list of chores she had to do. Cooking, cleaning, laundry, shopping, and tailoring. She happily accepted the chores forgetting that she was in a different era. Everything here was done by hand, so she greatly struggled to complete even one task. The captains eventually started taking turns to teach her how each chore was done. They were happy to see she was an excellent student. She listened carefully, and took mental notes. Within those weeks, she managed to learn how to do many of the things herself. Saitou also told her that if anyone asked why she lived there she was Hijikata's younger sister and to tell others to call her by her first name, so she wouldn't 'get confused'. Because she was treated with special attention, and her constant failures made her seem like a child, the lie was easily accepted as truth and the captains started to show some familiarity

Today it was her turn to cook and she wanted to show off to everyone that she can finally cook on her own. What she did not tell them was that somehow, her magic was beginning to grow much stronger than when she first came. Sometimes things will move on their own, or when she was searching for something it will appear right next to her. Other times words would escape her lips, and she would cast a type of spell that made her tasks less difficult. She was scared that the little progress she made would be reversed if they found out.

"_Incendere ignis_," she whispered, and there was fire on the stove. She quickly clasped her hands over her mouth, shocked that she had said such a thing. It had happened several times before, but each time she would feel horrified. She did not know what the words meant or how she knew them. She was afraid that someone might see her or that she would say the wrong thing and hurt them. She was afraid to get hurt, reject, killed, or humiliated. Here they trusted her, here they accepted her, here they treated her like another human being, here she was safe. _Am I?_ The thought left her just as fast as it came to her. She needed to focus on dinner. The men can get quite rowdy if dinner wasn't served on time. She felt honored that the men enjoyed her cooking when she made it correctly. She even stared adding a little more or less of the ingredients to make the taste more satisfying and her cooking experiments usually worked.

She decided to cook nakujaga today. Her father taught her how to make it. It technically wasn't invented until later in this century, but a little earlier wouldn't hurt the course of history, especially considering how her mere presence here has already changed it. She took out the ingredients she needed from the cabinet and began chopping them away. She may have come across clumsy, but that was only because she had no idea how things worked in this era. She was actually good at doing the chores since she and her mother lived alone and her mother was horrible at things like these. She smiled proudly at herself as she put the vegetables in the boiling pot of water. She began stirring it when she remembered that she had forgotten about the noodles. She searched for them desperately hoping the vegetables in the pot wouldn't burn. Once she found the noodles, she was happy to see the food didn't burn. She put the noodles inside, stirred for a while more, and then began making the rice. She finished early today, but that was a good thing, now the food had a chance to cool down.

At last dinner time came. She placed the pots and plates outside for the soldiers to serve themselves. The captains all helped serve the men and Hijikata gave the men the usual lecture, 'if any man doesn't finish his food, he will have to do all of Akira's chores for a whole week.' The punishment on its own wasn't so bad, but when added to their regular routine, they did not get enough rest and their stamina wouldn't hold. After the soldiers ate she went on to place the captains' trays in their respected place. As they ate, they themselves became lively. They talked about the hooligans they beat up and the beautiful woman they saw. They teased and played and Akira laughed. She always felt like she was at home with the captains. They were her fathers and brothers at once. She didn't know how she even lived a life without them back at her time.

"Did you make any progress on that translation, Akira-chan," asked Heisuke. It was now often teased that Akira and Heisuke probably were probably siblings by the way they knew what the other was thinking before they even said anything.

Akira replied to Heisuke with a smile, "I did. Ni-hi-su, _nivis_, means snow. So now we have gu-ra-di-o of the Lord of snow and cherries." Everyone was glad at the small progress. It might not seem like much, but the Shinsengumi already knew that whatever their enemies were looking for had the titles of Snow and Cherries, so they could get rid of anything that was just one of the things and not both.

"Speaking of which, how did you figure it out?" asked Shinpachi. He liked making conversation with her, even if it was just about nonsense. He grew fond of the girl during her time here. He was the only captain who had patted her head when she got something right. He once told her it was because he always wanted a little sister.

"I was playing with the pronunciations of the word based on the Latin routes, when I came across _nivis_. It just made more sense than any of the other things I thought of."

Harada looked at her suspiciously. "Was that really all you were doing?" he questioned her. Usually Harada and Shinpachi were on the same page on nearly everything, the great exception being Akira. He didn't trust her. Ever since she admitted she had the powers of a witch, although only because of her bloodline, he took a strong dislike towards her. When it used to be his turn to help her, he would always be wary of her and never allowed her to escape his sight. Shinpachi told her it was because a witch killed one of his lovers that he was planning to marry. He didn't give any more details than that.

"I'm telling the truth," she stared into his eyes like she always did with Saitou. He tsk-ed and that was the end of the conversation—at least that's what she thought.

"Are you sure," Okita teased, "I saw how you were making the spoons stir the pot all on its own when you were making dinner."

Everyone choked, spit, or stopped eating as they all turned to look at her. Akira herself had a look of shock on her face. She never saw the spoons move on their own.

"Is this true?" demanded Hijikata.

"I-I never saw the spoons move," she replied. She hoped her indirect answer would go unnoticed however; nothing went unnoticed in Saitou's eyes.

"You did not answer the question," he pointed out. He gazed into her eyes and knew she was hiding something, something important.

She lowered her voiced, "I don't know." She squeezed her hands together. It was a habit she developed when she felt uncomfortable with something. Not scared, or nervous, just uncomfortable. Almost like she had a bad feeling about something.

"What do you mean you don't know," Harada growled.

"Calm down Sano," Shinpachi cautioned his friend. "Please explain Akira-chan," he encouraged.

She kept her eyes on the floor mats. She didn't want to say it. It made her feel like she was back in Europe, in her era. The other children would yell, burn the witch! Burn her alive! They didn't mean it; they were only children but once they got older, their words became more and more frightening. The words echoed in her head. "It sometimes happens," she said softly, "usually when I'm by myself. Things move on their own. There are times when I notice and other times I don't, but when I do notice I try to stop it."

She quickly glanced into each of their eyes. She knew those eyes. They're scared. Of her and her potential power. Of what kind of things she could do to them. Of the truth that she was a witch. It pained her to see that the people she was learning to love were slipping away because of this cursed power she was born with. She felt hurt and defeated. Just like that time. What was 'last time'? She didn't know. She only knew that she has had this familiar feeling of loss before.

Hijikata cleared his throat to break the silence. "Well now that that's settled, let's finish our dinner," or so he said, but even Hijikata was hesitant to touch his dinner.

Akira knew this feeling far too well. The tension in the air, difficulty of breathing, avoiding her eyes. They were forcing themselves. Even Shinpachi and Heisuke whom she had developed a sister-like relationship with couldn't look at her. Abscondere tristitia, she muttered.

Heisuke looked up at her, once he realized this, he turned away again. "Hey did you say something," he asked staring at the floor.

If Heisuke would have looked up, he would have seen that she gave him a kind, serene smile. "No, not all," she lied. She got up and picked up her tray. "I need to put down the sheets from the laundry. Just leave the trays in the kitchen like always; I'll clean them up later." Heisuke nodded his head. When Akira finished with the sheets, she went back to the kitchen. All the plates were already washed and there were traces of food in the trash. She felt the pain in heart again.

"Abscondere tristitia," she said aloud but the pain was still

there.

"_Abscondere tristitia_" she tried again as the tears were building up in her eyes.

"_Abscondere tristitia, abscondere tristitia!_" The more she insisted, the less effective it was. She slid down the wall and ended sitting on the floor. Her mother had told her that a witch has to be calm to cast a spell; otherwise the spell might not work. Akira knew that, but she desperately wanted it to work. She didn't want to feel like this. Tears slid down her cheeks, sobs escaped her lips. She felt like she lost _him_ again. She cried in the darkness by herself.

"I wanna go home. Mommy, come take me home!" she called out in the middle of the night, knowing she would never go back home.

"Who's there?" called Saitou's cold voice.

Akira's heart froze. In the briefest moment, she calmed herself and whispered once more, "_abscondere tristitia."_

She wiped her tears and stood up. "Sorry Saitou-san. I finished with the sheets so I came here to wash the dishes, but I found they were already washed." She smiled a peaceful smile, a smile full of lies. She knew that. She knew he would see through it. She practically wished for it. She wanted to be called a liar and asked why she was lying. She wanted it.

"I see," he said and walked away.

He didn't even bother to search her eyes. He merely glanced in her direction and then turned away. _I see_. Now these were the words which echoed her mind. It wasn't rejection. It wasn't death. It wasn't humiliation. She simply no longer existed. _Look at me_, she thought. _Look into my eyes like you always do. Tell me I'm a liar. Tell me to tell you the truth..._

"Tell me you're not scared of me," she whispered into the emptiness of the kitchen.

When she returned to her room the spell was broken, but so was she. Streams of tears fell down her cheeks again. Cold, blue lights began to emerge from around the room. They slowly began to swirl around her, each of them softly landing onto her skin creating a layer of light.

"_Dues spatii et temporis, placere _

_Me reduceret _

Ubi i felix fuit."

Voices screamed in fear and confusing. She heard Hijikata yelling orders and the other captains did the same as they were trying to calm their men.

"We have to get Akira from her room before the flames spread!" she heard. It was a soldier.

How kind, she thought, _ that a soldier cares for my well-being_.

"Leave that witch to burn alive! We have to get out of here!" this time it was Harada's voice.

"Butâ€¦|" began the soldier, but he didn't finish.

Akira looked at the roof above her. The place was burning and they were leaving her to burn with it. _How fittingâ€¦| for a witch_, she thought. The flames that were to burn her never touched her as she disappeared. To where? Not the past, or the future. She was still in _this_ present, but in a place where she was happy. Happy inside her own lies, waiting for the truth to tear her apart again.

****Author's Note:****

****I know it sounds so depressing and I skipped time a little too fast, oopsy, but I needed it for the next chapter. I'm actually in a depressing mood right now, so yeah. Beware of possibly more depressing stuff. And before I forget (I forget things really easily), here is the translations :D****

*******_Abscondere tristitia_***** - Hide Sadness****

****_"Dues spatii et temporis, placere _****- God of Space and Time, please****

****_Me reduceret _****- Take me back****

****_Ubi i felix fuit."_**** - When I was happy****

****Why did I have to choose these stupid words T-T****

6. Chapter 6: Winter

Chapter 6: Winter

"What's wrong?" the snow woman asked the girl, "Did you not like my gift?"

The snow woman was referring to the burning of the headquarters.

The girl shook her head. That wasn't it.

"Was your heart broken?" guessed the snow woman.

The girl's eye saddened, and then nodded.

The snow woman sighed and sat next to the girl.

"Are they the reason?" the snow woman glared to the group of men running from the fire.

_The girl nodded. _

"Do you want to hurt them?"

_Did she want to hurt them? The girl contemplated the question.

_

She nodded her head.

_The snow woman smiled. _

"Do you want me to kill them?"

The girl shook her head. She didn't want to see them dead.

"Then how do you want to punish them?"

She gazed at the men again. They lost their home.

_The girl gave the snow woman a sad smile. _

"Thank you, but your gift was enough," the girl answered to the snow woman.

The girl returned to the human realm, satisfied with the 'punishment,' leaving the snow woman alone.

"Foolish child," said the snow woman, "that is never enough."

It has been four days since the Shinsengumi headquarters burned to the ground and four days since Akira went missing. They knew, no, they assumed she was still alive. After the men evacuated, they noticed she wasn't with them. Harada who was the closest to the girl did nothing to save her. He detested her. Okita was out on patrol that night. Shinpachi and Heisuke were the furthest and so couldn't go for the girl even if they wanted to. Sannan was ordered to scout for a new headquarters, while Koundo and Hijikata stayed to maintain order. Saito was neither close or far from the girl, but he assumed that she would hear the men screaming and evacuate herself. Fortunately her body wasn't found in the ashes, but they didn't know where she went.

It was hard on everyone, including the soldiers. Everyone kept saying how they should have gone for her. Saitou never said anything about the case, but he thought it. It was always in his mind. He saw her in the kitchen before the fire started, but he couldn't face her. He, like the rest of the Shinsengumi members, knew that she was no threat to them. She was fond of them, and they were fond of her. There was no reason to fear the young witch who couldn't even control her powers, but he did. They all did. After countless times they had looked at death in the eyes, they couldn't face a mere witch.

_Snow? _Saitou looked up at the sky. It was starting snow. If they didn't find her soon, she could freeze to death.

Tensions ran high in the new headquarters. Shinpachi and Harada were always fighting about how Harada should have saved Akira. Heisuke seemed to be out of it and unable to properly lead his men. Hijikata was always grouchier than usual. Okita kept unintentionally adding fuel to the fire. The soldiers defied their authority because the captains couldn't agree on anything. How did one girl change everything?

Saitou was returning his men back to their new headquarters, when one

of his men called out. "Hey isn't that Akira-chan!"

Saitou instantly turned his head to the direction his soldiers were looking at and there she was. She was wearing a new kimono and bowing respectfully at the owner of a sweets shop. The owner smiled and nodded his head. Akira stood and smiled. She then began to joyfully walk away. Away from him. Away from the Shinsengumi. Their source of happiness was walking away, yet he could not bring himself to move. The shock of seeing her alive and well paralyzed him.

She stopped again at a flower shop and gazed at the flowers tenderly as if they were her lovers. Saitou took that opportunity to regain himself. "Wait here," he ordered his men and walked in her direction.

Akira leaned in closer to smell the flowers, her loose hair falling in her face. She used her left hand to pull it back. She was about to leave until she heard a voice calling her.

"Akira," he called. His heart jumped as he pronounced her name, knowing that she will respond to his voice. She had told him that his voice always made her turn, even when she knew who it was. He never thought much of it, nor did he care, but knowing he will see her face made him strangely happy. All their problems will be gone the moment she turns.

She turned her head up towards his direction and her heart sank to the ground. She could see he was greatly pleased to find her, while she was greatly horrified. _Why now?_ she thought. She quickly lowered her eyes and stared at the floor. Saitou sensed the girl's uneasiness.

"What's wrong?" he asked worriedly. He reached out his hand towards her delicate shoulder and she backed away.

"Nothing," she lied, "I'm just surprised to see you here." She kept her gaze down, not looking into Saitou's eyes. She was lying and she was hiding something. She didn't want the man to know, but Saitou already had a feeling she was.

"Look at me," he commanded. The girl's eyes turned to meet his. _She's lying_. She turned away at once, but she knew he had already seen in them. He decided to let it go for now.

"Let's go," he commanded again. The girl's heart shattered. Go? She didn't want to go, at least not to where he is going. She wanted to stay and be free for a while longer, looking for her book.

She softly said, "I don't want to." It wasn't that she disliked them. She was very much still fond of them, but she couldn't now

Saitou's irises split and his glare was terrifying. He had been upset a number of times, but this was the first time he looked absolutely furious. It frightened the girl. She was a mouse staring in the snake's eyes.

"It's an order," he growled in his deep voice.

The girl flinched at his voice, and then nodded. She followed Saitou

back to headquarters.

Everyone was arguing as usual in the new headquarters. Harada and Shinpachi were practically at each other's throats today and Hijikata just about enough of it today and was about to give them a lecture when Saitou entered.

"Good timing," said Okita lazily, but when he turned his eyes widened at the sight of the girl behind him. "Akira-chan?"

Everyone turned their eyes to the curious little girl behind him. As they entered Heisuke jumped up and ran towards her.

"Akira-chan!" he exclaimed. He reach out his arms to hug her.

"Don't touch me!" she yelled.

Heisuke stopped in his tracks, shocked that the soft spoken girl had just yelled. She hid more behind Saitou and kept her eyes down. She didn't want to be mean, but she had to.

"What's wrong, Akira-chan?" asked Shinpachi worriedly.

Akira looked down at her hands. They couldn't see but she could see it very well. This place was trying to kill her. "Please, don't ask," she whispered.

"Did someone do something bad to you? If they did then I willâ€¦," Shinpachi was cut off by Harada's voice.

"Your kind isn't exactly welcomed in temples are they?" Harada wasn't being cruel to her by pointing it out. In fact, he was treating her like an average person, but to her they were the most evil words that could come from his mouth. She didn't want to admit it, but she was never able to enter into any type of temple. Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist, you name it and she never entered.

She nodded her head. Temples purify and it's attempting to purify her blood, but it's never that simple. Her witch blood has been in her for generations and it's too late to purify it now.

Heisuke smiled. "Come on I'm sure it's not that bad." He patted her shoulder. A wave of currents became visible.

"No!" she yelled, but it was too late. The electrical waves shocked him and he fell backwards. Tears formed in her eyes threatening to spill over at any moment.

"Hey, watch what you're doing!" Harada screamed at her.

Everyone approached Heisuke to see if he's alright. When he said he was fine just a little surprised, everyone visibly relaxed. Everyone except Akira. It's true he was fine, but that was only because this is a temple. Next time could be much worse, especially since the winter season is here. It's her time of the year. The time where her power is the strongest and most unpredictable.

"I think it would be best if I leave," she told her companions.

Everyone stared at her like she was crazy.

"No, it's fine. We just have to keep our distance right?" said Heisuke cheerfully, but he was forcing himself. The thought of the girl leaving frightened him.

"That's right," said Harada. "If you leave I'll never hear the end of it from these guys." He smiled at her. _He smiled_.

She shook her head and gave him a sad smile. That was not the problem.

"It's already winter," she said.

"I thought winter was an even better reason to stay in a nice place," Okita added.

Hijikata and the rest agreed and would not let her continue what she was about to say. Saitou took her to her room. She planned to stay until nightfall and then leave to not cause any trouble. She would leave a note in the kitchen, but Saitou followed her into her room and sat there, staring at her. She felt uncomfortable at the man's stare and had to speak up.

"Is something wrong Saitou-san?" she asked.

He merely stared at her saying nothing, while she was waiting for his response. What he did, he said, was something she never imagined.

****Author's Note:****

****After getting several follows, one favorite, and one review, I am so happy T-T. No literally. Thanks to you guys I feel like I can keep writing, no, I HAVE to keep writing. I can see the next chapter in my head already and it's #%^\$%#. Sorry but I'm not going to spoil it for you =P. But as a heads up, I might get a little side tracked for a chapter or two more before I go back to magic spells and the the book. Please keep reading, and don't forget to review because I like critics :D****

7. Chapter 7: The Fake Romance

Chapter 7: The Fake Romance

"Is something wrong Saitou-san?"

Akira waited for the man to answer but he only sat there watching her. She was starting to feel uncomfortable as he never left his gaze from her. After a while, she finished the pile of papers waiting for her. She even wrote her good-bye letter, while Saitou was still looking at her, sitting there since he came.

"Saitou-san," she started again, "Tell me what you have to say. You're beginning to make me feel uncomfortable just staring at me."

"You're planning on leaving," it was statement, not a question.

"I see, so you're planning to stop me," she too replied in a statement.

He nodded his head and made no other motion as she approached him. She sat directly in front of him and explained to him why she was leaving in a very small whisper, as if she were telling him a big secret.

"Saitou-san, I'm only telling you because I know you will listen and I know you won't interrupt me. It's already winter, the time I was born. It's also the time where my powers are strong, too strong. I can be extremely dangerous if I don't restrain my power. It's much harder for me to do that though because I'm a young witch. If I am to stay here, I need to find that book to place a binding spell on myself. Until then I'm just a hazard, especially towards Heisuke."

"Why Heisuke?" was the only thing he asked. He didn't question her reason, nor was he frightened of her. He simply wanted to know why his youngest comrade was the in the most danger.

She gave him an understanding smile, "Remember when I moved away and I scream 'don't touch me' to him."

Saitou nodded again, wondering where this was leading.

"Well that's because my family is cursed. All our lovers die because we kill them. It doesn't matter when or how because it always happens. When we don't have lovers, the curse still insists on hurting someone. It usually chooses the closest male towards the witch and slowly tortures him over time. Heisuke will suffer much misfortune just because he received that shock and still insisted it was a minor setback; however if I leave, I can trick the curse that we aren't that close and he'll be fine."

"So you need someone whose role in your life is greater than Heisuke's."

Akira was a bit surprised at Saitou's statement.

"I guess you can also see it like that, but I don't want give anyone any trouble."

"And the only role greater than a sibling is that of a lover," Saito said thoughtfully to himself.

Akira was shocked with what Saitou was saying; she didn't understand why he thinking about this at all.

"No. I don't want a lover. I don't want anyone to get hurt because of me I want.â€| All of her emotions were crashing together. She started to feel dizzy.

Saitou finally paid attention to the witch as she was beginning to lose herself. This conversation was making Akira stressed. Her head began to spin. Her powers grew out of control. The papers began flying around the room.

"I want to protect you guys. I want to protect the Shinsengumiâ€| Noâ€| Stop! I don't want to hurt them!" Tears came to Akira's eyes as

she cried out trying to prevent her magic from harming Saitou and the other Shinsengumi she struggled against her magic, she slowly passed out.

"Mommy, who's that boy who looks like me?"

_"What are you talking about Akira-chan? There's no one else here but you and me." _

Akira was confused. Her mother then went to the store so she was home by herself. She wanted to play with someone but no one was around. That's when the boy appeared.

"Hello, do you want to play with me? Wait, first I think I should introduce myself. I'm â€|"

_"Huh? You're ..." _

Akira wanted to ask a lot of questions, but everything became a blur again. She heard a man's voice calling out her name.

"Akira"

She slowly opened her eyes and saw Saitou's face in front of hers.

Everything in the room was back to normal and the things were back in their place. She could only imagine that she herself put them back after the chaos. She nodded her head, lightly blushing. She had made several scenes before but this one was just absolutely ridiculous. She wanted to be mature and explain things to Saitou but she lost control. This is why she hated winter. Both her powers and her mental state were out of balance. Saitou visibly relaxed and moved back so she could sit up.

"Are you alright?" he asked. He wanted to make sure she was mentally stable enough to continue telling her what was on his mind.

"Yes, I apologize for acting that way. I get like that during winter a lotâ€| that's why I want to leave," she whispered the last part as even Saitou was against her departure.

"Are you willing to listen to me now," his voice was serious. His eyes were demanding her attention. He was hypnotizing her with his gaze. She didn't even realize when she nodded her head. She only knew she did because Saitou continued.

"I will to pretend to be your lover. I'm not afraid of death and the others are out of harm's way.

"I refuse," she said quickly and boldly, "I don't want to force you to do something so unnecessary and also my absence would only be temporary. Everyone would be out of harm's way and I can also take this opportunity to look for the book."

"But you might not return." It sounded as if it physically hurt him to say it out loud.

He was right. If she found the book, she really might not come back. Akira knew he might not actually care about her but he did care for

his comrades and they were all fond of her. Her leave would be their pain and their pain would be his. She knew that. Maybe she wanted Saitou to actually care for her. Maybe she really didn't want to leave. Whatever it was, she couldn't help but go with the man's plan.

"Very well," she said sadly, "but it'll be painful to be my lover, even if it's a fake one. You filled with misfortune and you can still die."

She held the vain hope that he will change his mind and decide against his plan after all. She quickly crushed her own hope. Saitou was not the type of man to retreat from his own plan and she was right.

He reached out his left hand towards hers. A small electric current became visible and he hesitated, but only for a moment. He then lightly placed his hand over hers. An electric wave quickly flowed through his body. He flinched. He did not know how Heisuke said it was only a small shock; he was in excruciating pain. He didn't show it in his face nor did he remove his hand from hers. He kept his cool demeanor as he gazed into her eyes, assuring her everything was okay. She didn't need to leave. They could figure it out. He leaned in closer to her face. His hair brushed her cheeks as he made his way to her right ear.

"I know," he whispered into her ear. He softly squeezed her hand, silently telling her he was already in pain.

A small smile formed her lips. It no longer mattered why Saitou was doing this, just the fact that he was made her happy.

"You're very brave Saitou-san."

Saitou moved away from her face but still kept a close distance. He brushed her face with his right hand, feeling the shock sensation getting stronger. His eyebrows twitched and Akira started to feel guilty for being happy.

"Saitou-san, you don't have to force yourself, I canâ€¦"

"Hajime," he interrupted, "you can call me Hajime when we're alone."

"Butâ€¦" she began to protest, but Saitou's eyes told her to say it, to call out his name.

"Hajime," she whispered steadily. The one and only thing she truly hated about Saitou was his hypnotizing gaze. Every time she looked into his eyes she would unconsciously do as she is told.

He continued to caress her face as he added on the conditions to this fake romance.

"Don't tell anyone, they will only question the reason."

Akira nodded.

"Also," he continued, "I apologize if I'm a lousy lover."

His cheeks became pink, but he didn't remove his eyes from hers. Akira smiled and closed her eyes, enjoying this moment as she was tricking the curse.

"It's okay," she said. "As long as Hajime is okay with it, then it's okay."

When she opened her eye again, he gave her a rare smile and her heart skipped a beat. Her face turned red as he proceeded to make their foreheads touch.

"Good night Akira," he said as he breathed into her face.

Akira could not take her eyes away from Saitou's. Her heart was racing madly in her chest. _It's just pretend_ she told herself, but she couldn't help but to feel happy. Her face softened and she gave him a warm smile.

"Good night Saitou-san."

"Hajime," he reminded her.

"I'm sorry," said the girl still in his trance, "Hajime."

He nodded approvingly and let her go. She felt her heart drop as she noticed Saitou relax as he moved farther away from her. _It's only pretend,_ she reminded herself again, but even so, she felt so very happy.

Saitou did not feel the same as she did and as for the act, he was merely imitating what he had seen Harada do several times, but he was reaching his limit. The shock that ran through his body was becoming too much for him to bear. _For Heisuke. For the Shinsengumi_, he thought and the pain subdued a bit. Now, his fake romance with Akira became just another mission to protect the Shinsengumi.

****Author's Note:****

****Okay so I said I had everything in my head for this chapter and I did... the problem was I didn't write it down so I couldn't make it the way I originally thought. Then I had writer's block. Yeah, it was the most painful week of my life. You can all thank my cousin Yaya who added stuff in the middle of the chapter. It really did get my imagination flowing and I was able to finish. Honestly, I don't know ****_when_**** I would have updated if it weren't for her, so thanks Yaya! I also got some reviews (some by the same person but I still like the input) and I was dying of happiness. Thanks you guys! I promise that at the end of story I will have a dedication page just for you. (I am NOT joking)****

****P.S. If you didn't notice, I changed the genre and it's now officially romance/tragedy. You will all know at the end why, BUT... I'll just wait until you guys get there for me to finish the sentence. I can say you guys might hate me for it.****

****Please Review! Me like critics :D****

Chapter 8: Say Itâ€¦

It's dangerous," said the snow woman.

"I know."

"No, you don't. He can hurt you."

The girl gave her a sad, wicked smiled.

"I'm more of a danger to him than he is to me."

The snow woman gazed at the girl who was learning to become a woman. She was still young and naïve. She trusted this man because she believed he will love herâ€¦no. It was because the girl was sure he would never love her, but the snow woman wasn't convinced. Even if he had no feelings for her, she may sprout some for him and that was the danger.

"Be careful," the snow woman warned her.

_"I will," said the girl with a smile. _

Akira didn't know how to face Saitou the next day. _Normal_, she kept telling herself. _You have to treat him like normal._ She hurried to the kitchen. If she didn't have breakfast ready on time everyone was going to have a fit.

As she entered the kitchen Heisuke and Saitou were already in the kitchen trying to make breakfast. Saitou's food looked okay; nothing grand but it was edible. Heisuke on the other hand, his food looked like they were becoming charcoal. Heisuke saw Akira and smiled at her.

"Good morning Akira-chan, don't worry we got breakfast today," he said cheerfully.

Akira made a face that clearly stated she didn't trust him. She eyed the food he had on the stove suspiciously. He followed her eyes and saw they were burning. He became flustered and tried to take out the food only to drop it on the floor. His face looked as if he was doomed and then he looked dejected. Akira giggled at his little performance, which made Heisuke blush.

"Don't laugh Akira-chan, it's not funny," he whined.

"Indeed," Saitou added. "The vice-commander will be very upset."

"Don't worry Heisuke, I'm sure he won't eat you alive." Akira replied, still giggling. She was really glad her encounter with Saitou was with Heisuke. He always had a way of making awkward moments light, so she was really relaxed.

Heisuke pouted. He was clearly upset that she was not only contributing to Saitou's silent scorn but still making fun of him.

"Why do you never take my side Akira-chan," he asked in a whiny voice.

"Probably because it's never wise to be on your side," she winked playfully at him, still having fun with him.

"What's with that?! Name one time it wouldn't have been a good idea," Heisuke challenged Akira. It was a challenge Akira was sure she could win, since there was plenty of times to choose from.

"Well I couldn't exactly defend you from Harada-san during the lunch stealing incident. He hates my guts and would have eaten me alive. Okita-san and Shinpachi would have gotten me back later if I helped you get them back for giving you the wrong directions to the store. And I would like to see you try to defy Saitou-san or Hijikata-san on any matter. I mean Hijikata-san isn't called the demon vice-commander for nothing." She grinned as she spoke about how well she knew her friends, well that and because she saw Heisuke's face frown even more on her last statement.

"No fair, that's cheating Akira! How can you bring Hijikata-san's temper into this." He was fuming. He was trying to prove so desperately to explain why Hijikata was so scary until Saitou caught his attention.

"Heisuke, your food."

"Huh? Oh. Wah!" The food was burning again.

Akira just whole-heartedly laughed, and then calmed down long enough to tell him, "You go wait with everyone. I'll finish your part before you turn it into charcoal."

"You're mean Akira-chan," he complained, but he didn't defy her. He left the kitchen and as he stood at the door he looked back meeting her eyes. She stared into them for a while before another smile formed on her lips and she stuck out her tongue. He made an angry face at this and stormed out of there. Saitou observed their little performance quietly. They were showing signs of closeness again and that could be potentially dangerous. He needed a way to cover it quickly.

"You shouldn't tease him so much," Saitou commented to her assuming she would understand his logic.

"I can't help it, he's so cute when he's upset," she said. A smile formed on her face as she remembered all the times she had teased him. _I mean honestly who doesn't like teasing Heisuke._ He was always making funny faces and sound effects when they teased him. Then he would get upset at you when things don't go well and you're rubbing it in his face. Not to mention it always made her smile as if she was teasing a real brother.

"Cute?" Saitou questioned her. Now he was confused. He knew she and Heisuke were closer than any other members of the Shinsengumi. One could even say that if Heisuke had to choose between the two, he would choose her. The fact that they were close wouldn't bother him so much if it weren't that that closeness could result in Heisuke's demise. What he didn't understand was why she was still acting familiar with Heisuke when she didn't want him dead.

"Yeah," she continued, "he's like a child trying to go against his

elders. He knows it's impossible yet he still tries. It's quite adorable don't you think?"

Saitou stayed silent deep in thought_. I wonder if this when a lover would show jealousy_. Jealousy would be an excellent way to keep Akira's feelings in check in this situation. The problem was he didn't know how he should portray it. He was trying to remember how Harada showed a woman he was 'jealous' in a manner that wasn't too territorial. After all, he really did not feel as if he was being threatened. He just didn't want Akira to talk to Heisuke in a manner that showed any kind of intimacy â€" brotherly or otherwise. He wanted to prevent any portions of the curse to fall onto Heisuke so it would be beneficial that he remind her that they were lovers.

Akira thought his silence was too long and assumed he was lost in thought with another matter. She didn't like silence. It was always soâ€|boring and after spending time with Heisuke, she didn't exactly want to stay bored. She wondered what would happen if she teased Saitou a little. She never really tried, but that was mostly because she never dared to. Now she was really curious to see how he would react.

"You aren't jealous Saitou-san? How disappointing," she said teasingly.

She cursed herself for choosing that out of all things to tease him about. Of course Saitou wasn't jealous! Even if he was, he would never say so. His cursed stoic face would never reveal it, and above that, his pride is would probably be too big to admit it. He's known as the most emotionless man in all of Japan for crying out loud!

Saitou was caught off guard by her comment. It's ridiculous to even suggest that he was jealous, but he was thinking of stating it, so he used this chance to execute his plan carefully.

"I am. Very," he said dispassionately.

Akira tried her best. She really did, but she couldn't help allow a small chuckle escape her lips. Saitou, jealous? No way was that possible. She understood what he was doing. He was playing his part in this love affair. She, on the other hand, could be considered to be emotionally cheating on him with her 'brother'. Yuck. During her rollercoaster of thoughts, she couldn't help but giggle a bit.

"Did I say something wrong?" Saitou asked, slightly worried he might have said it wrong. Maybe he needed to do something more to make it come across to her.

"No," Akira said while smiling at him. "You didn't say anything wrong. It's just the fact that you said it."

"When one's lover is smiling at another man, is it not normal to be jealous," he stated.

Saitou was sure that portraying jealousy would be the correct course of action in this case, but the reaction was not what he expected. He did not understand why it was amusing that he said it. Did it mean that if any other man than himself said it, it would be considered

normal? Akira smiled at him tenderly. He's seen that face before. It was the 'mommy is going to explain it to you slowly' face. She normally used it on Shinpachi when he didn't understand the concepts of staying out of Harada's personal business or the newer soldiers when they didn't understand the orders. He was slightly annoyed that she decided to show him that face.

"Saitou-san," she began, "you don't have to force yourself. I was only teasing you."

I would also be worried for the man who ever did make you jealous, she thought.

At that moment Saitou caught something he knew he could use towards his advantage.

"You are still calling me Saitou," he pointed out.

Akira's head mentally tripped. What? So he was serious about the whole first name thing? _No, duh. This is Saitou, everything about him is serious_. Akira's heart started beating a little faster. She was nervous and didn't want to call him by his first name. It indicates too much intimacy. Sure, she called Heisuke by his first name but that was because she was a little older than him. The others called her by her first name because they didn't want the soldiers to know about the truth. She didn't know Saitou enough nor had the guts to call him by his first name.

"It's a little embarrassing," she said. She began looking down and fidgeting.

He noticed her peculiar behavior and believed he was in the right track. He checked to make sure the food won't burn and then made his way towards her. He learned from yesterday that keeping a close distance and some physical contact made her cheeks blush " her mind was thinking of him. He lifted her face from her chin gently to make her face him. The electric shocks began to go through his flesh. His face hardened a bit as it was a little worse than yesterday, but he had to endure.

"Say it. My name." He gazed deep into her eyes and waited for her response.

"Ha-jime," she said more skeptically. His eyes were doing it again, hypnotizing her. She tried to resist, telling herself not to get carried away.

Their cheeks brushed each other's when he moved in to whisper in her ear. He hoped his actions wouldn't be perceived as too bold and become counterproductive.

"Hajime, what?" he persisted.

She felt his breath on her neck and then, she felt something else. His lips ever so lightly touched her ears as he whispered into her ear. Her face turned a bright red and her heart began to race madly in her chest. _No. Resist._

"Hajime" | "

"Yes, Akira."

Her heart nearly jumped out of her chest. The little self-resistance she had melted away as whispered her name in his deep velvet voice.

"I'm sorry," were the first things that came out of her mouth.

He moved back and gazed into her eyes again.

"You're sorry for what?"

"For not calling you by your name."

She was completely under his trance now. All she could think about was Saitou and if Saitou would forgive her. Saitou, on the other hand, finally reached his limit and stepped back a bit because of the electric shock he was receiving.

"Good," he said as he relaxed.

Akira took it as a sign that he was happy with her response so she gave him a small smile. He nodded and went back to making breakfast.

"Ha-hajime," she called out.

He slightly turned his eyes to her as to announce that she had his attention.

"Do you want me to help you with anything?" she asked shyly.

He nodded and told her what he wanted to make and what she had to do. Akira did what she was told when she was told and they completed breakfast on time. No one ever suspected what happened in the kitchen—no one except Okita who accidentally saw the little display. He enjoyed seeing Saitou trying to act like a normal man, so he decided to keep it for himself for now.

****Author's Note:****

****The kitchen, again?! Yeah I know, I need better places for them to have alone time. --"** But that's okay because I can finally make love-dovey scenes... Yay! I like those :D Honestly guys, I might have a little too much fun with this. Like I said before I'll be distracted for a chapter or two more before I get back to the main problem... and I'm gonna love it! Also I know I said I was going to wait until after the story finished, but I can't help but thank Akiko88 for reviewing. Thank you! You are so helpful. I'm glad you said my Saitou was IC, because I do try... oh so very hard that I try. So I'm glad you pointed it out. That means I'm on track. *doing a happy dance* Okay, so that's the end of my little rant.**

****Please Review! Me like the critics... Cause They Are Awesome!
:D****

9. Chapter 9: The Well Kept Secret

Chapter 9: The Well Kept Secret

A few more days pass. Saitou and Akira have been spending a little more time together. They talk about their day and how it went. They talk about the difficulty of situation, but ever since that day in the kitchen, they haven't been alone. Someone was always with them. When they tried and trick people away, Okita always appeared. They were beginning to suspect that he had some kind of knowledge about the arrangement, but they couldn't confirm it.

Today Akira looked towards the gates where Saitou and his men were preparing to leave for patrol. Her green eyes showed a mixture of worry and sorrow. Worry, because they might run into danger. Sorrow, because she too wanted to go.

"I envy them," she murmurs to herself, not expecting to be heard.

"Because they get to with Saitou?" a smug voice from behind her asks.

Akira shakes her head and replies, "because they get to outside," her eyes saddening a little more.

"Eh, now what would poor Saitou-san say if he ever heard this?" the voice teased.

She turned to look at the person behind her. I knew it. Right behind her stood the man who could never live a day without making a smart comment " Okita. She blinked of confusion.

"Why would Saitou-san care if he heard me Okita-san?" she asked innocently. Why would Saitou care indeed, but Okita replied by saying the last thing she had ever wanted to hear from his mouth.

"I thought he told you to call him Hajime," a mischievous grin spreading across his face.

Her eyes widened and her cheeks turned a bright red. She was a deer in headlights at this moment. She was frightened, but unsure of what to do. The phrase we're doomed, was all she could think of. She looked down and tried to think of some kind of explanation he would take.

"Tha- that was"|" was all she managed to say before Okita started laughing and quickly stopped.

"Don't worry I won't tell anyone yet," he said as a small smile played at the corner of his lips.

****_Yet**_**. So he does mean tell._

"I want to see Hajime-kun's face after I tell him first, then I'll decide if it what would be more fun."

Okita assumed it was Saitou's idea to keep it quiet, so he couldn't wait to see his face after he told him. The thought of Saitou's shocked look on his usually emotionless face made Okita want to die of laughter, until he saw Akira's face. Her face looked sad and dejected. He thought it would be fun to tease her too, but she was more sensitive to it than he thought she would be.

"Hey, don't make a face like that. Everyone would have noticed at some point," he meant to cheer her up, but it took the opposite effect. She looked even more depressed than before. Those really were not the words she wanted to hear.

Then Okita noticed Saitou scanning the area one more time before his departure and Okita quickly took action. He hugged Akira. When Saitou saw this, his eyes narrowed and he clenched his jaw. He knew what was going to happen to Okita afterwards. Okita gave Saitou a huge smile and Saitou's eyes widened. _He knows, so whyâ€|_ Saitou thought and he saw his comrade get electrocuted. He wanted to help but he knew he couldn't, so Saitou left in a bad mood because he wasn't able to stop his friend.

It all happened so fast for Akira. One moment Okita was giving her the worst news of her life and the next, he was hugging her. She immediately saw the electric current flowing through Okita's body. She wanted to push him away, but he didn't let himself. The next thing she saw was Okita throw himself backwards to the floor.

"Are you okay Okita-san?" she asked, but all you saw was a sheepish grin on Okita's face.

"I'm fine," he said and his grin grew wider, "but I think Hajime-kun left in a bad mood."

"Eh?" she was confused.

Okita laughed. It was interesting to see Saitou react for once. He thought of doing it again, but the hug is a little too muchâ€| maybe if he did something else to stir Saitou up.

"What do you mean Saitou-san left in a bad mood?" Akira asked.

He was too busy thinking up ways to prank these two that he had forgotten the girl was still in front of him.

He gave her the most mischievous smile he has ever had and told her, "hmm, it was probably had to do with the hug I gave you."

"I see," she said.

Saitou was probably worried about Okita. She wanted to run to him and tell him that Okita's fine, but she can't. She's not allowed to leave the temple. She also wondered if he was mad at her for not stopping Okita like she did to Heisuke. She sighed. For now she'll just wait until Saitou comes back from patrol, then they could have a proper talk.

Saitou came back late from patrol, but he seemed to be in a hurry which was rare for him. _He probably just needed to tell Hijikata-san something important_, Akira told herself. She would wait for Saitou in the spot where they have been meeting the past few days, but he did not come. When she didn't see Saitou in the common room for dinner either, she became even more worried. To not worry the others, she pulled Hijikata aside to talk to him.

"Toshi, may I speak with you?" she asked in a low voice to not be heard.

She felt uncomfortable using his nickname, but it became a habit. When she wanted to talk about something serious, she would call him Toshi that was an indirect way to tell others that may be around to leave. He nodded and they talked as they walked.

"What's wrong Akira?" he asked once they were away from hearing distance.

"I haven't seen Saitou since he came back from patrol and that's not like him. He usually stays to finish the rest of his tasks, so I was wondering if you sent him on an errand."

Hijikata's eye brows creased. He knew what she meant by an errand, she was talking about a mission.

"I'm afraid that it's confidential Akira," he gave her a meaningful look as a warning that said she shouldn't ask any further.

"Will he be back late?" she dropped her voice to a whisper. She knew she shouldn't pry but she couldn't help it. She dropped her gaze. She knew Hijikata was glaring at her without looking up.

"It's confidential," Hijikata repeated.

She knew that he wouldn't budge. Even if she begged him, he wouldn't leak out a single piece of information. He didn't want to have to kill her if she found out.

"I see," she said. Her heart dropped a bit, but she knew there were some things that she would never know about the Shinsengumi.

"Oh, but you do"

Immediately, Akira looked behind her. Hijikata's eyes narrowed for a moment and looked towards the direction the girl was looking at. _Nothing_, they both thought. She mumbled her thanks to Hijikata and she went to bed unsettled.

"Careful, they're catching on to you."

****Author's Note:****

****So what happens when you get midterms, a cold, an upset stomach that won't even let you eat sh*t, and a major headache... each one after another? A really upset author who can't write anything b/c she's busy dealing with her bodily needs. For once, can't you be my side mother nature! And while your at it tell all your little sicknesses to STOP MAKING A LINE! *Sigh* Sorry for ranting but I wasn't exactly happy that I couldn't update until now --" I promised myself to at the very****_ least _****I would update once a week, but I obvious couldn't so I'm upset. :/ I kinda know where the story is headed though so you guys don't have to worry about my dear writer's block. I will force a story out of my brain if I have to to make up it up to you guys.****

****Anyways... please review. I would really appreciate the feedback... and it would so very make my day.****

****P.S. before I forget I will take "situation" recommendations aka**

tell me what you would like to see in the story. I don't promise anything, but I will try to incorporate into the story. If you decide to do this, PM me just in case I like. I wouldn't want to spoil anything ;)**

Again please Review, me like the critics :)

10. Chapter 10: Frozen Emotions

Chapter 10: Frozen Emotions

It's been two days since Saitou left and for two days that Akira finishes her chores early and waits in the gate. The snow gently fell on Akira's hands and she blew into them to try to keep them warm.

"Akira-chan, are you still standing there?"

Akira turned to see Shinpachi looking at her with a worried expression.

"I'm sorry Shinpachi-san. I was spacing out a bit," she gave him a comfortable smile.

He knew she was lying to him but he smiled back none the less. He patted her head.

"Don't worry he'll be fine," he assured her. For some odd reason Shinpachi never felt the shock or if he did, he never let Akira know.

She seemed confused for a bit, but she quickly realized who he was talking about " Saitou. He knew she was worried about Saitou, but he got something wrong. She wasn't worried about his safety. Saitou is a master's swordsman, doubting him would be insulting; she was worried about something else.

"I know," she said, her smile still on her face. She didn't have to worry him more than she had already. "I'm going to make dinner now do you want to join me?" she asked returning to her usual demeanor.

His smile widened and he agreed.

After dinner she washed the plates and claimed that she was going to bed, but only stayed in her room until she knew every one of the captains was fast asleep. She ran to wait for Saitou at the gates again, hidden from the soldiers. She stayed there until midnight. She sighed, _he won't be back tonight_. As she prepared to leave she saw the figure of a man walking towards into the headquarters. Saitou was back. He was wearing his usual black kimono, so one couldn't see the stains of blood from where she was, but she knew they were there. There was a small smudge of it on his cheek. He probably didn't know it was still visible.

Her face hardened, _so it was an 'errand.' _She didn't know why those errands always bothered her so much. There were times when the captains went on other secret missions, but those never bothered her. It was only those specific 'errands' that made her uneasy, mostly because she knew it was connected to something. _But what?_

She let it go because even if she didn't like it, she also didn't want to find out what it was. Instead she smiled and ran to wait for him in the garden near his room. She wanted it to seem casual; she did need to apologize after all.

She waited for a long time and so she was enjoying her view. The place looked like a winter wonderland or a snow castle. The thought of a snow castle reminded her of her favorite story "The Snow Queen. She giggled. The Queen herself was the antagonist of the story but she always felt like she can relate to her in some way. As she heard Saitou's footsteps approaching she thought, "perhaps we aren't so different after all" the Snow Queen and I. Saitou came into view and she stood up to greet him.

"How was your trip Saitou-san?" she asked kindly.

His eyes narrowed and he visibly tensed. "Why did she want to know?" His years in the Shinsengumi taught him to never say anything related to a secret mission no matter how small the detail; those details might be hints to their enemies.

She was confused at his reaction. She didn't know whether he was disturbed by the question or because she was waiting for him. If it was the question she tried to quickly fix her mistake.

"Oh, I " I'm sorry. I didn't mean to ask such a question. Y- You don't have to answer if you don't want to," her voice became lower and lower the more she spoke. She was worried that she might have made Saitou angrier at her.

Saitou visible relaxed and swiftly walked past her. He knew the reason she was there was because she wanted to tell him something, perhaps related to Okita, but he didn't want to see her at this moment. He didn't know why, but her presence slightly irritated him. Whatever she wanted to say it could wait.

His silence was maddening. Yes, he was always quiet and yes, it usually made one uncomfortable but this was different. She could feel the anger and she knew he was being quiet to keep her away from him.

"Are you angry, Saitou-san?" she asked.

She didn't mean to ask. It honestly just came out, but now she was anxious to hear his response. He ignored her and just entered his room closing the door behind him. Akira felt heartbroken at that moment, but she wasn't planning to give up. She sat at his door.

"Saitou-san, I really want to talk to you so I'll stay here until you feel like talking okay?" she said.

And she did. She sat there until her eye lids began to get heavy. "A few more minutes", she always said to herself until she finally fell asleep outside his door, not noticing the snow falling gently beside her.

When Saitou heard that she would stay, he felt a bit childish. He twisted and turned until he realized that he was being childish. He

knew what Okita was like and yet Saitou chose to blame Akira for it. He sighed. He was going to talk to her, but stopped at the door. _She probably already went to bed_, he thought and he went back to bed planning to talk to her first thing in the morning, not knowing she was sleeping quietly outside his door with the cold snow.

****Author's Note:****

****I know I said I would only be distracted for a few chapters but I can't help myself, I like writing moments just for those two. I'll be distracted for another two or three chapters, but after I will get to the main plot because the main character has to go through winter first. After winter, she's going to start acting like a mischeavous devil and get on people's nerves in a cute way. :)****

****Anyways please review because critics are an essential part of story building :)****

11. Chapter 11: The Cold

****Chapter 11: The Cold****

Akira felt the cold breeze of the night while she was asleep, but made no effort to move. I have to talk to Saitou-san first besides I'll only be here for a few more seconds. Those seconds became hours and she stayed there, waiting the whole night as she fell into a sleep full of dreams.

Saitou was a little on edge the next morning. He was going to apologize to Akira for his improper behavior. He did not want the others to hear this conversation, especially Okita, so he decided to wake earlier than usual to talk with Akira.

He opened his door and marveled at the beautiful scenery in front of him. The garden was covered in snow. A faint smile played on his lips until his eye caught a glimpse of a figure below him. His eyes widened and his tiny smile quickly turned into a frown as he realized who it was.

Akira was sitting there pale and shivering.

Many things crossed his mind as he questioned the little woman's sanity. She must have known it was cold, so why did she not leave? Why did she decide to stay? She didn't owe him an apology or an explanation. If anyone did, it was Souji who needed to do the explaining not her. Then again, Souji did not owe him an explanation either. He was merely being friendly with Akira to his own hazard. It was then that it dawned on him: Souji intended for Saitou to get upset.

He sighed. He was an idiot. Even more so because as he was there trying to make sense of things, the young woman was still freezing in the cold in her sleeping yukata.

He lifted her up, which was difficult to do because she slept in a sitting position, and carried her into his room. Her body was heavier than he thought, especially for a woman. Her face cuddled into his chest and her hands clung onto his clothes as her body tried to quickly find warmth. It took him a while to put her into his futon,

precisely because she wouldn't let go. He found himself getting frustrated at her child-like behaviors. She was old enough to at least not cling to him.

He reached for the blanket as she continued to cling to him in hope that she would let go of him as soon as she found a different source of warmth. He covered her body and she let go. Unconsciously, he brushed a few strands out of her face and he stiffened as he realized something important. Since the moment he picked her up until now he has not received a single shock; normally, even a light touch would send him in excruciating pain, but he felt nothing at all.

****Author's Note:****

I know it's short (probably the shortest I have ever written) and boring (yes i think its boring) but I can't think of anything else. I looked at the story outline I came up with my cousin (when my cousin wasn't around) and the first things I thought were ew (too corny) and blah (I don't care whatever). When the writer thinks that, it's not a good sign, so what did I do? I threw it out the window. I mean I love my cousin and her ideas were good but SHE MOVED TOO FAST. Seriously she already wanted my characters to get married and live happily ever after and... well I have to think on my own again. I told her to write her own story because she was stripping my story of its elements. So if you ever want to write your own story, consider other's ideas but don't let them take over the project. - Honestly it's more of an excuse because I'm just really stressed right now.

Please Review because I like knowing what you guys are thinking

12. Chapter 12: Forbidden Quest

****Chapter 12: The Forbidden Quest****

His face hardened at this new discovery as only one thought crossed his mind: She's deceiving them. There were also many other possibilities as to why he wasn't shocked, but that was the most predominant of all of them. He was fond of the woman, but she was dangerous. He didn't like the prospect of killing her, but if he had to he would. The Shinsengumi was his life and she was not going to destroy it. He quickly made his way to inform the Vice-commander and await further instructions on how to deal with this new predicament.

* * *

><p>That morning Akira awoke, troubled by a dream. She hated herself for not being able to remember. It was important and only one word stood out in her mind: eternity. She didn't know much about being a witch, but did know a bit. She knew that throughout time, every quest for anything eternal ended badlyâ€| But was it really something she should worry about? It was a dream after all.<p>

Dreams are something meant to be seen.

Akira quickly sat up when she heard the voice however, it was too

quick and her head began spinning in circles. When she finally steadied herself, there was no one in the room. It frightened her because it wasn't the first time she heard the voice. When she was with Hijikata the other day, they both heard the voice and found no one as well.

"Dreams are something meant to be seenâ€¦ if that's the case, then why can I not remember anything?" she mused aloud. It was then she realized that she finally realized that she was inside a room.

All thoughts about her dream were blown away with this new discovery. She was absolutely sure she was waiting outside Saito'sâ€¦ wait, was she inside Saito's room? After giving the room another glance, she determined that, yes; she was in Saito's room. Heat crept up to her face as she realized that she fell asleep outside his room. She felt like a stalker, but they didn't have stalkers in this era. What would they call themâ€¦ spies? Spy. That's right; they still didn't trust her completely. No, it was obvious they didn't trust her. She had foreign blood running through her veins, had supernatural powers, and acted too friendly.

As she got up, she wondered if she should put his futon away. It was only polite, but she decided against it. She was sure her actions last night got her into enough trouble; there was no need to bring more. Yet, there was still the nagging feeling that he still allowed her into his bedroom. Because he's a gentleman, she reasoned with herself, but her maiden heart wants to believe that there was something more.

****Author's Note: ****

The muses are obviously not happy with me because I obviously have no inspiration T-T. Inspiration Please Come Back To Me! Anyways, this is the most coherent thing I've been able to come up with so far. I feel terrible for it being short, but I also feel terrible for not updating sooner. Hope you all forgive me!

****P.S.**** I deleted the snow woman conversation from the previous chapter b/c it wouldn't fit into this one. I really do like this 'eternity' and 'dream' thing I added here and want to expand on it. Where the story is heading to, I don't know but I hope I get there soon.

End
file.